

Isaiah 13:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Their children also shall be dashed to pieces before their eyes;
their houses shall be spoiled, and their wives ravished.

Analysis

The horror intensifies: 'Their children also shall be dashed to pieces before their eyes; their houses shall be spoiled, and their wives ravished.' This describes war's most appalling atrocities—children murdered, property plundered, women violated. Modern readers recoil from such language, questioning how a loving God could decree such judgment. Yet several points must be considered:

1. This describes the realities of ancient warfare, which God permits as consequence of sin.
2. Babylon itself committed such atrocities against others, including God's people (Psalm 137:8-9).
3. Judgment is proportional—they receive what they inflicted.
4. This foreshadows the ultimate horror of final judgment separated from God.

Historical Context

Ancient warfare routinely involved such atrocities. Assyrian and Babylonian inscriptions boast of brutal treatment of conquered peoples. Psalm 137:8-9 records exiled Jews remembering Babylon's brutality: 'Happy shall he be, that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones.' This is *lex talionis*—law of retaliation—they receive what they inflicted. When Babylon fell, such horrors may have occurred, though Daniel 5 suggests relatively quick conquest. The language primarily serves to emphasize judgment's comprehensiveness and the principle that sin brings its own horrific consequences.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. How do we reconcile God's love with His decreeing such terrible judgments as consequences of sin?
2. What does proportional judgment (receiving what one inflicted on others) teach about God's justice?

Interlinear Text

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Their children

H5768

יִרְטָשׁ ו

also shall be dashed to pieces

H7376

לְעֵינֶיהָ ׀

before their eyes

H5869

יִשָּׁ סוּ

shall be spoiled

H8155

בְּתֵיָּהּ ׀

their houses

H1004

וּנְשֵׂיהָ ׀

and their wives

H802

תִּשְׁגָּלָנָה:

H7693

Additional Cross-References

Nahum 3:10 (Parallel theme): Yet was she carried away, she went into captivity: her young children also were dashed in pieces at the top of all the streets: and they cast lots for her honourable men, and all her great men were bound in chains.

Hosea 10:14 (Parallel theme): Therefore shall a tumult arise among thy people, and all thy fortresses shall be spoiled, as Shalman spoiled Beth-arbel in the day of battle: the mother was dashed in pieces upon her children.